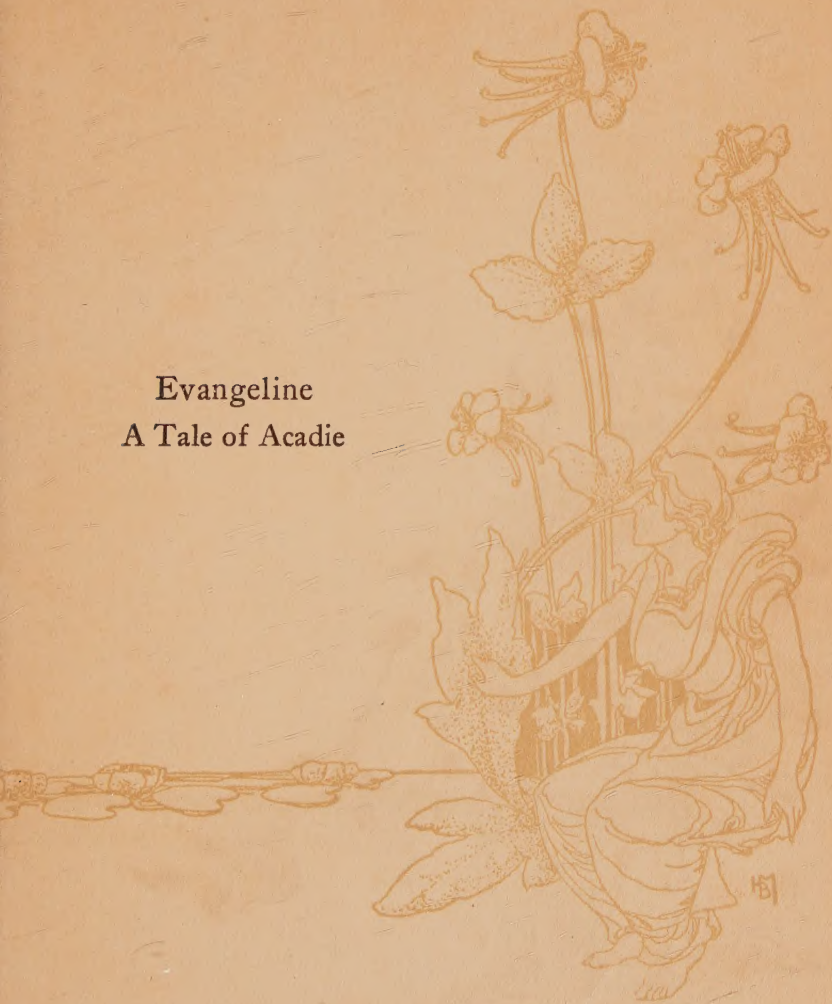


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Evangeline
A Tale of Acadie





EVANGELINE



*Henry
Wadsworth
Longfellow*

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Evangeline

A Tale of Acadie

PART THE FIRST

THIS is the forest primeval. The
murmuring pines and the hem-
locks,
Bearded with moss, and in garments
green, indistinct in the twilight,
Stand like Druids of eld, with voices
sad and prophetic,
Stand like harpers hoar, with beards
that rest on their bosoms.

* Evangeline

Loud from its rocky cavern, the deep-
voiced neighbouring ocean
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate an-
swers the wail of the forest.

This is the forest primeval; but where
are the hearts that beneath it
Leaped like the roe, when he hears in
the woodland the voice of the hunts-
man?

Where is the thatch-roofed village, the
home of Acadian farmers, —

Men whose lives glided on like rivers
that water the woodlands,

Darkened by shadows of earth, but re-
flecting an image of heaven?

Waste are those pleasant farms, and the
farmers for ever departed!

Scattered like dust and leaves, when the
mighty blasts of October

Evangeline ❀

Seize them, and whirl them aloft, and
sprinkle them far o'er the ocean.
Nought but tradition remains of the
beautiful village of Grand-Pré.

Ye who believe in affection that hopes,
and endures, and is patient,
Ye who believe in the beauty and
strength of woman's devotion,
List to the mournful tradition still sung
by the pines of the forest;
List to a Tale of Love in Acadie, home
of the happy.

I.

In the Acadian land, on the shores of
the Basin of Minas,
Distant, secluded, still, the little village
of Grand-Pré

Lay in the fruitful valley. Vast meadows stretched to the eastward,
Giving the village its name, and pasture to flocks without number.

Dikes, that the hands of the farmers had raised with labour incessant,
Shut out the turbulent tides; but at stated seasons the flood-gates
Opened, and welcomed the sea to wander at will o'er the meadows.

West and south there were fields of flax, and orchards and cornfields
Spreading afar and unfenced o'er the plain; and away to the northward
Blomidon rose, and the forests old, and aloft on the mountains

Sea-fogs pitched their tents, and mists from the mighty Atlantic

Looked on the happy valley, but ne'er from their station descended.

Evangeline ❧

There, in the midst of its farms, re-
posed the Acadian village.

Strongly built were the houses, with
frames of oak and of chestnut,

Such as the peasants of Normandy built
in the reign of the Henries.

Thatched were the roofs, with dormer-
windows; and gables projecting

Over the basement below protected and
shaded the door-way.

There in the tranquil evenings of sum-
mer, when brightly the sunset

Lighted the village street, and gilded the
vanes on the chimneys,

Matrons and maidens sat in snow-white
caps and in kirtles

Scarlet and blue and green, with distaffs
spinning the golden

Flax for the gossiping looms, whose noisy
shuttles within doors

✻ Evangeline

Mingled their sound with the whirl of
the wheels and the songs of the
maidens.

Solemnly down the street came the parish
priest, and the children

Paused in their play to kiss the hand he
extended to bless them.

Reverend walked he among them; and
up rose matrons and maidens,

Hailing his slow approach with words of
affectionate welcome.

Then came the labourers home from the
field, and serenely the sun sank

Down to his rest, and twilight prevailed.

Anon from the belfry

Softly the Angelus sounded, and over
the roofs of the village

Columns of pale blue smoke, like clouds
of incense ascending,

Evangeline ❀

Rose from a hundred hearths, the homes
of peace and contentment.

Thus dwelt together in love these simple
Acadian farmers, —

Dwelt in the love of God and of man.
Alike were they free from

Fear, that reigns with the tyrant, and
envy, the vice of republics.

Neither locks had they to their doors, nor
bars to their windows;

But their dwellings were open as day
and the hearts of the owners;

There the richest was poor, and the
poorest lived in abundance.

Somewhat apart from the village, and
nearer the Basin of Minas,
Benedict Bellefontaine, the wealthiest
farmer of Grand-Pré,

❖ Evangeline

Dwelt on his goodly acres; and with him,
directing his household,
Gentle Evangeline lived, his child, and
the pride of the village.

Stalworth and stately in form was the
man of seventy winters;

Hearty and hale was he, an oak that is
covered with snow-flakes;

White as the snow were his locks, and his
cheeks as brown as the oak-leaves.

Fair was she to behold, that maiden of
seventeen summers.

Black were her eyes as the berry that
grows on the thorn by the way-side,

Black, yet how softly they gleamed
beneath the brown shade of her
tresses!

Sweet was her breath as the breath of
the kine that feed in the meadows.

Evangeline ❀

When in the harvest heat she bore to the
reapers at noontide

Flagons of home-brewed ale, ah! fair in
sooth was the maiden.

Fairer was she when, on Sunday morn,
while the bell from its turret

Sprinkled with holy sounds the air, as
the priest with his hyssop

Sprinkles the congregation, and scatters
blessings upon them,

Down the long street she passed, with
her chaplet of beads and her missal,

Wearing her Norman cap, and her kirtle
of blue, and the ear-rings,

Brought in the olden time from France,
and since, as an heirloom,

Handed down from mother to child,
through long generations.

But a celestial brightness — a more
ethereal beauty —

✻ Evangeline

Shone on her face and encircled her form,
when, after confession,
Homeward serenely she walked with
God's benediction upon her.

When she had passed, it seemed like the
ceasing of exquisite music.

Firmly builded with rafters of oak, the
house of the farmer

Stood on the side of a hill command-
ing the sea; and a shady

Sycamore grew by the door, with a
woodbine wreathing around it.

Rudely carved was the porch, with seats
beneath; and a footpath

Led through an orchard wide, and dis-
appeared in the meadow.

Under the sycamore-tree were hives
overhung by a penthouse,

Such as the traveller sees in regions re-
mote by the road-side,

Evangeline ❀

Built o'er a box for the poor, or the
blessed image of Mary.

Farther down, on the slope of the hill,
was the well with its moss-grown
Bucket, fastened with iron, and near it
a trough for the horses.

Shielding the house from storms, on the
north, were the barns and the farm-
yard.

There stood the broad-wheeled wains
and the antique ploughs and the
harrows;

There were the folds for the sheep; and
there, in his feathered seraglio,

Strutted the lordly turkey, and crowed
the cock, with the selfsame

Voice that in ages of old had startled the
penitent Peter.

Bursting with hay were the barns, them-
selves a village. In each one

✻ Evangeline

Far o'er the gable projected a roof of
thatch; and a staircase,
Under the sheltering eaves, led up to the
odorous corn-loft.
There too the dove-cot stood, with its
meek and innocent inmates
Murmuring ever of love; while above
in the variant breezes
Numberless noisy weathercocks rattled
and sang of mutation.

Thus, at peace with God and the
world, the farmer of Grand-Pré
Lived on his sunny farm, and Evan-
geline governed his household.
Many a youth, as he knelt in the church
and opened his missal,
Fixed his eyes upon her, as the saint of
his deepest devotion;

Evangeline ❀

Happy was he who might touch her hand
or the hem of her garment!

Many a suitor came to her door, by the
darkness befriended,

And as he knocked and waited to hear
the sound of her footsteps,

Knew not which beat the louder, his
heart or the knocker of iron;

Or at the joyous feast of the Patron
Saint of the village,

Bolder grew, and pressed her hand in the
dance as he whispered

Hurried words of love, that seemed a
part of the music.

But, among all who came, young Gabriel
only was welcome;

Gabriel Lajeunesse, the son of Basil the
blacksmith,

Who was a mighty man in the village,
and honoured of all men;

For since the birth of time, throughout
all ages and nations,
Has the craft of the smith been held in
repute by the people.

Basil was Benedict's friend. Their chil-
dren from earliest childhood
Grew up together as brother and sister;
and Father Felician,

Priest and pedagogue both in the village,
had taught them their letters

Out of the selfsame book, with the
hymns of the church and the plain-
song.

But when the hymn was sung, and the
daily lesson completed,

Swiftly they hurried away to the forge
of Basil the blacksmith.

There at the door they stood, with
wondering eyes to behold him

Evangeline ❧

Take in his leathern lap the hoof of the
horse as a plaything,

Nailing the shoe in its place; while near
him the tire of a cart-wheel

Lay like a fiery snake, coiled round in a
circle of cinders.

Oft on autumnal eves, when without in
the gathering darkness

Bursting with light seemed the smithy,
through every cranny and crevice,

Warmed by the forge within they
watched the labouring bellows,

And as its panting ceased, and the sparks
expired in the ashes,

Merrily laughed, and said they were
nuns going into the chapel.

Oft on sledges in winter, as swift as the
swoop of the eagle,

Down the hill-side bounding, they glided
away o'er the meadow.

Oft in the barns they climbed to the
populous nests on the rafters,
Seeking with eager eyes that wondrous
stone, which the swallow
Brings from the shore of the sea to re-
store the sight of its fledglings;
Lucky was he who found that stone in
the nest of the swallow!
Thus passed a few swift years, and they
no longer were children.
He was a valiant youth, and his face,
like the face of the morning,
Gladdened the earth with its light, and
ripened thought into action.
She was a woman now, with the heart
and hopes of a woman.
“Sunshine of Saint Eulalie” was she
called; for that was the sunshine
Which, as the farmers believed, would
load their orchards with apples;

Evangeline ❧

She, too, would bring to her husband's
house delight and abundance,
Filling it full of love and the ruddy faces
of children.

II.

NOW had the season returned, when
the nights grow colder and longer,
And the retreating sun the sign of the
Scorpion enters.

Birds of passage sailed through the leaden
air, from the ice-bound,
Desolate northern bays to the shores of
tropical islands.

Harvests were gathered in; and wild
with the winds of September

Wrestled the trees of the forest, as Jacob
of old with the angel.

All the signs foretold a winter long and
inclement.

Evangeline ❀

Bees, with prophetic instinct of want, had
hoarded their honey
Till the hives overflowed; and the In-
dian hunters asserted
Cold would the winter be, for thick was
the fur of the foxes.
Such was the advent of autumn. Then
followed that beautiful season,
Called by the pious Acadian peasants
the Summer of All-Saints!
Filled was the air with a dreamy and
magical light; and the landscape
Lay as if new-created in all the fresh-
ness of childhood.
Peace seemed to reign upon earth, and
the restless heart of the ocean
Was for a moment consoled. All sounds
were in harmony blended.
Voices of children at play, the crowing
of cocks in the farm-yards,

Whir of wings in the drowsy air, and
the cooing of pigeons,
All were subdued and low as the mur-
murs of love, and the great sun
Looked with the eye of love through the
golden vapours around him;
While arrayed in its robes of russet and
scarlet and yellow,
Bright with the sheen of the dew, each
glittering tree of the forest
Flashed like the plane-tree the Persian
adorned with mantles and jewels.
Now recommenced the reign of rest and
affection and stillness. ♡
Day with its burden and heat had de-
parted, and twilight descending
Brought back the evening star to the sky,
and the herds to the homestead.
Pawing the ground they came, and rest-
ing their necks on each other,

Evangeline ❀

And with their nostrils distended inhaling the freshness of evening.

Foremost, bearing the bell, Evangeline's beautiful heifer,

Proud of her snow-white hide, and the ribbon that waved from her collar,
Quietly paced and slow, as if conscious of human affection.

Then came the shepherd back with his bleating flocks from the sea-side,

Where was their favourite pasture. Behind them followed the watch-dog,

Patient, full of importance, and grand in the pride of his instinct,

Walking from side to side with a lordly air, and superbly

Waving his bushy tail, and urging forward the stragglers;

Regent of flocks was he when the shepherd slept; their protector,

✻ Evangeline

When from the forest at night, through
the starry silence, the wolves
howled.

Late, with the rising moon, returned
the wains from the marshes,
Laden with briny hay, that filled the air
with its odour.

Cheerily neighed the steeds, with dew on
their manes and their fetlocks,
While aloft on their shoulders the
wooden and ponderous saddles,
Painted with brilliant dyes, and adorned
with tassels of crimson,
Nodded in bright array, like hollyhocks
heavy with blossoms.

Patently stood the cows meanwhile, and
yielded their udders
Unto the milkmaid's hand; whilst loud
and in regular cadence

Evangeline ❀

Into the sounding pails the foaming
streamlets descended.

Lowling of cattle and peals of laughter
were heard in the farm-yard,

Echoed back by the barns. Anon they
sank into stillness;

Heavily closed, with a creaking sound,
the valves of the barn-doors,

Rattled the wooden bars, and all for a
season was silent.

Indoors, warm by the wide-mouthed
fireplace, idly the farmer

Sat in his elbow-chair, and watched how
the flames and the smoke-wreaths

Struggled together like foes in a burn-
ing city. Behind him,

Nodding and mocking along the wall,
with gestures fantastic,

Darted his own huge shadow, and vanished away into darkness.
Faces clumsily carved in oak, on the back of his arm-chair
Laughed in the flickering light, and the pewter plates on the dresser
Caught and reflected the flame, as shields of armies the sunshine.
Fragments of song the old man sang, and carols of Christmas,
Such as at home, in the olden time, his fathers before him
Sang in their Norman orchards and bright Burgundian vineyards.
Close at her father's side was the gentle Evangeline seated,
Spinning flax for the loom, that stood in the corner behind her.
Silent awhile were its treadles, at rest was its diligent shuttle,

Evangeline ❀

While the monotonous drone of the
wheel, like the drone of a bagpipe,
Followed the old man's song, and united
the fragments together.

As in a church, when the chant of the
choir at intervals ceases,
Footfalls are heard in the aisles, or words
of the priest at the altar,
So, in each pause of the song, with
measured motion the clock clicked.

Thus as they sat, there were foot-
steps heard, and, suddenly lifted,
Sounded the wooden latch, and the door
swung back on its hinges.
Benedict knew by the hob-nailed shoes it
was Basil the blacksmith,
And by her beating heart Evangeline
knew who was with him.

✻ Evangeline

“Welcome!” the farmer exclaimed, as
their footsteps paused on the thresh-
old,

“Welcome, Basil, my friend! Come,
take thy place on the settle

Close by the chimney-side, which is al-
ways empty without thee;

Take from the shelf overhead thy pipe
and the box of tobacco;

Never so much thyself art thou as when
through the curling

Smoke of the pipe or the forge thy
friendly and jovial face gleams

Round and red as the harvest-moon
through the mist of the marshes.”

Then, with a smile of content, thus
answered Basil the blacksmith,

Taking with easy air the accustomed seat
by the fireside: —

Evangeline ❧

“Benedict Bellefontaine, thou hast ever
thy jest and thy ballad!
Ever in cheerfulest mood art thou, when
others are filled with
Gloomy forebodings of ill, and see only
ruin before them.
Happy art thou, as if every day thou
hadst picked up a horseshoe.”
Pausing a moment, to take the pipe that
Evangeline brought him,
And with a coal from the embers had
lighted, he slowly continued:—
“Four days now are passed since the
English ships at their anchors
Ride in the Gaspereau’s mouth, with
their cannon pointed against us.
What their design may be is unknown;
but all are commanded
On the morrow to meet in the church,
where his Majesty’s mandate

Will be proclaimed as law in the land.

Alas! in the mean time

Many surmises of evil alarm the hearts
of the people."

Then made answer the farmer: —

"Perhaps some friendlier purpose
Brings the ships to our shores. Per-
haps the harvests in England
By untimely rains or untimelier heat
have been blighted,
And from our bursting barns they would
feed their cattle and children."

"Not so thinketh the folk in the vil-
lage," said, warmly, the blacksmith,
Shaking his head, as in doubt; then,
heaving a sigh, he continued: —

"Louisburg is not forgotten, nor Beau-
séjour, nor Port Royal.

Many already have fled to the forest,
and lurk on its outskirts,

Evangeline ❧

Waiting with anxious hearts the dubious
fate of to-morrow.

Arms have been taken from us, and
warlike weapons of all kinds;

Nothing is left but the blacksmith's
sledge and the scythe of the mower."

Then with a pleasant smile made answer
the jovial farmer:

"Safer are we unarmed, in the midst
of our flocks and our cornfields,
Safer within these peaceful dikes, be-
sieged by the ocean,

Than were our fathers in forts, be-
sieged by the enemy's cannon.

Fear no evil, my friend, and to-night
may no shadow of sorrow

Fall on this house and hearth; for this
is the night of the contract.

Built are the house and the barn. The
merry lads of the village

✻ Evangeline

Strongly have built them and well ; and,
breaking the glebe round about
them,

Filled the barn with hay, and the house
with food for a twelvemonth.

René Leblanc will be here anon, with
his papers and inkhorn.

Shall we not then be glad, and rejoice
in the joy of our children? ”

As apart by the window she stood, with
her hand in her lover's,

Blushing Evangeline heard the words
that her father had spoken,

And, as they died on his lips the worthy
notary entered.

III.

BENT like a labouring oar, that
toils in the surf of the ocean,
Bent, but not broken, by age was the
form of the notary public;
Shocks of yellow hair, like the silken
floss of the maize, hung
Over his shoulders; his forehead was
high; and glasses with horn bows
Sat astride on his nose, with a look of
wisdom supernal.
Father of twenty children was he, and
more than a hundred
Children's children rode on his knee, and
heard his great watch tick.

✻ Evangeline

Four long years in the times of the war
had he languished a captive,
Suffering much in an old French fort
as the friend of the English.
Now, though warier grown, without all
guile or suspicion,
Ripe in wisdom was he, but patient, and
simple, and childlike.
He was beloved by all, and most of all
by the children;
For he told them tales of the Loup-
garou in the forest,
And of the goblin that came in the night
to water the horses,
And of the white Létiche, the ghost of
a child who unchristened
Died, and was doomed to haunt unseen
the chambers of children;
And how on Christmas eve the oxen
talked in the stable,

Evangeline ❧

And how the fever was cured by a spider
shut up in a nutshell,
And of the marvellous powers of four-
leaved clover and horseshoes,
With whatsoever else was writ in the
lore of the village.
Then up rose from his seat by the fire-
side Basil the blacksmith,
Knocked from his pipe the ashes, and
slowly extending his right hand,
“Father Leblanc,” he exclaimed, “thou
hast heard the talk in the village,
And, perchance, canst tell us some news
of these ships and their errand.”
Then with modest demeanour made
answer the notary public:
“Gossip enough have I heard, in sooth,
yet am never the wiser;
And what their errand may be I know
not better than others.

Yet am I not of those who imagine some
evil intention

Brings them here, for we are at peace;
and why then molest us?"

"God's name!" shouted the hasty and
somewhat irascible blacksmith;

"Must we in all things look for the
how, and the why, and the where-
fore?"

Daily injustice is done, and might is the
right of the strongest!"

But, without heeding his warmth, con-
tinued the notary public, —

"Man is unjust, but God is just; and
finally justice

Triumphs; and well I remember a story
that often consoled me,

When as a captive I lay in the old French
fort at Port Royal."

Evangeline ❀

This was the old man's favourite tale,
and he loved to repeat it
Whenever neighbours complained that
any injustice was done them.
"Once in an ancient city, whose name
I no longer remember,
Raised aloft on a column, a brazen
statue of Justice
Stood in the public square, upholding
the scales in its left hand,
And in its right a sword, as an emblem
that justice presided
Over the laws of the land and the
hearts and homes of the people.
Even the birds had built their nests in
the scales of the balance,
Having no fear of the sword that flashed
in the sunshine above them.
But in the course of time the laws of
the land were corrupted;

✻ Evangeline

Might took the place of right, and the
weak were oppressed, and the
mighty

Ruled with an iron rod. Then it
chanced in a nobleman's palace

That a necklace of pearls was lost, and
ere long a suspicion

Fell on an orphan girl who lived as
maid in the household.

She, after form of trial condemned to
die on the scaffold,

Patiently met her doom at the foot of
the statue of Justice.

As to her Father in heaven her innocent
spirit ascended,

Lo! o'er the city a tempest rose; and the
bolts of the thunder

Smote the statue of bronze, and hurled
in wrath from its left hand

Evangeline ❀

Down on the pavement below the clat-
tering scales of the balance,
And in the hollow thereof was found
the nest of a magpie,
Into whose clay-built walls the neck-
lace of pearls was inwoven.”
Silenced, but not convinced, when the
story was ended, the blacksmith
Stood like a man who fain would speak,
but findeth no language;
All his thoughts were congealed into
lines on his face, as the vapours
Freeze in fantastic shapes on the win-
dow-panes in the winter.

Then Evangeline lighted the brazen
lamp on the table,
Filled, till it overflowed, the pewter
tankard with home-brewed
Nut-brown ale, that was famed for its

strength in the village of Grand-
Pré;

While from his pocket the notary drew
his papers and ink-horn,

Wrote with a steady hand the date and
the age of the parties,

Naming the dower of the bride in flocks
of sheep and in cattle.

Orderly all things proceeded, and duly
and well were completed,

And the great seal of the law was set
like a sun on the margin.

Then from his leathern pouch the farmer
threw on the table

Three times the old man's fee in solid
pieces of silver;

And the notary rising, and blessing the
bride and the bridegroom,

Lifted aloft the tankard of ale and
drank to their welfare.

Evangeline ❀

Wiping the foam from his lip, he
solemnly bowed and departed,
While in silence the others sat and mused
by the fireside,
Till Evangeline brought the draught-
board out of its corner.
Soon was the game begun. In friendly
contention the old men
Laughed at each lucky hit, or unsuccessful
manœuvre,
Laughed when a man was crowned, or a
breach was made in the king-row.
Meanwhile apart, in the twilight gloom
of a window's embrasure,
Sat the lovers, and whispered together,
beholding the moon rise
Over the pallid sea and the silvery mist
of the meadows.
Silently one by one, in the infinite
meadows of heaven,

✱ Evangeline

Blossomed the lovely stars, the forget-
me-nots of the angels.

Thus passed the evening away. Anon
the bell from the belfry
Rang out the hour of nine, the village
curfew, and straightway
Rose the guests and departed ; and silence
reigned in the household.
Many a farewell word and sweet good-
night on the door-step
Lingered long in Evangeline's heart and
filled it with gladness.
Carefully then were covered the embers
that glowed on the hearth-stone,
And on the oaken stairs resounded the
tread of the farmer.
Soon with a soundless step the foot of
Evangeline followed.

Evangeline ❧

Up the staircase moved a luminous space
in the darkness,

Lighted less by the lamp than the shining
face of the maiden.

Silent she passed through the hall, and
entered the door of her chamber.

Simple that chamber was, with its curtains
of white, and its clothes-press

Ample and high, on whose spacious
shelves were carefully folded

Linen and woolen stuffs, by the hand of
Evangeline woven.

This was the precious dower she would
bring to her husband in marriage,

Better than flocks and herds, being
proofs of her skill as a housewife.

Soon she extinguished her lamp, for the
mellow and radiant moonlight

Streamed through the windows, and

✻ Evangeline

lighted the room, till the heart of
the maiden
Swelled and obeyed its power, like the
tremulous tides of the ocean.
Ah! she was fair, exceeding fair to be-
hold, as she stood with
Naked snow-white feet on the gleaming
floor of her chamber!
Little she dreamed that below, among
the trees of the orchard,
Waited her lover and watched for the
gleam of her lamp and her shadow.
Yet were her thoughts of him, and at
times a feeling of sadness
Passed o'er her soul, as the sailing shade
of clouds in the moonlight
Flitted across the floor and darkened
the room for a moment.
And as she gazed from the window she
saw serenely the moon pass

Evangeline ❀

Forth from the folds of a cloud, and
one star follow her footsteps,
As out of Abraham's tent young Ish-
mael wandered with Hagar!

IV.

PLEASANTLY rose next morn the
sun on the village of Grand-Pré.
Pleasantly gleamed in the soft, sweet air
the Basin of Minas,
Where the ships, with their wavering
shadows, were riding at anchor.
Life had long been astir in the village,
and clamorous labour
Knocked with its hundred hands at the
golden gates of the morning.
Now from the country around, from the
farms and neighbouring hamlets,
Came in their holiday dresses the blithe
Acadian peasants.

Evangeline ❀

Many a glad good-morrow and jocund
laugh from the young folk

Made the bright air brighter, as up from
the numerous meadows,

Where no path could be seen but the
track of wheels in the greensward,

Group after group appeared, and joined,
or passed on the highway.

Long ere noon, in the village all sounds
of labour were silenced.

Thronged were the streets with people;
and noisy groups at the house-
doors

Sat in the cheerful sun, and rejoiced and
gossiped together.

Every house was an inn, where all were
welcomed and feasted;

For with this simple people, who lived
like brothers together,

All things were held in common, and
what one had was another's.
Yet under Benedict's roof hospitality
seemed more abundant:
For Evangeline stood among the guests
of her father;
Bright was her face with smiles, and
words of welcome and gladness
Fell from her beautiful lips, and blessed
the cup as she gave it.

Under the open sky, in the odorous
air of the orchard,
Bending with golden fruit, was spread
the feast of betrothal.
There in the shade of the porch were
the priest and the notary seated;
There good Benedict sat, and sturdy
Basil the blacksmith.

Evangeline ❀

Not far withdrawn from these, by the
cider-press and the beehives,
Michael the fiddler was placed, with the
gayest of hearts and of waistcoats.
Shadow and light from the leaves alter-
nately played on his snow-white
Hair, as it waved in the wind; and the
jolly face of the fiddler
Glowed like a living coal when the
ashes are blown from the embers.
Gaily the old man sang to the vibrant
sound of his fiddle,
Tous les Bourgeois de Chartres, and le
Carillon de Dunkerque,
And anon with his wooden shoes beat
time to the music.
Merrily, merrily whirled the wheels of
the dizzying dances
Under the orchard-trees and down the
path to the meadows;

Old folk and young together, and children mingled among them.

Fairest of all the maids was Evangeline,
Benedict's daughter!

Noblest of all the youths was Gabriel,
son of the blacksmith!

So passed the morning away. And
lo! with a summons sonorous
Sounded the bell from its tower, and
over the meadows a drum beat.
Thronged erelong was the church with
men. Without, in the churchyard,
Waited the women. They stood by the
graves, and hung on the head-stones
Garlands of autumn-leaves and ever-
greens fresh from the forest.
Then came the guard from the ships, and
marching proudly among them

Evangeline ❀

Entered the sacred portal. With loud
and dissonant clangour
Echoed the sound of their brazen drums
from ceiling and casement, —
Echoed a moment only, and slowly the
ponderous portal
Closed, and in silence the crowd awaited
the will of the soldiers.
Then uprose their commander, and spake
from the steps of the altar,
Holding aloft in his hands, with its seals,
the royal commission.
“You are convened this day,” he said,
“by his Majesty’s orders.
Clement and kind has he been; but how
you have answered his kindness,
Let your own hearts reply! To my
natural make and my temper
Painful the task is I do, which to you
I know must be grievous.

Yet must I bow and obey, and deliver
the will of our monarch;
Namely, that all your lands, and dwell-
ings, and cattle of all kinds
Forfeited be to the crown; and that
you yourselves from this province
Be transported to other lands. God
grant you may dwell there
Ever as faithful subjects, a happy and
peaceable people!
Prisoners now I declare you; for such
is his Majesty's pleasure!"
As, when the air is serene in the sultry
solstice of summer,
Suddenly gathers a storm, and the deadly
sling of the hailstones
Beats down the farmer's corn in the field
and shatters his windows,
Hiding the sun, and strewing the ground
with thatch from the house-roofs,

Evangeline ❀

Bellowing fly the herds, and seek to
break their inclosures;

So on the hearts of the people descended
the words of the speaker.

Silent a moment they stood in speech-
less wonder, and then rose

Louder and ever louder a wail of sorrow
and anger,

And, by one impulse moved, they madly
rushed to the door-way.

Vain was the hope of escape; and cries
and fierce imprecations

Rang through the house of prayer; and
high o'er the heads of the others

Rose, with his arms uplifted, the figure
of Basil the blacksmith,

As, on a stormy sea, a spar is tossed by
the billows.

Flushed was his face and distorted with
passion; and wildly he shouted, —

“Down with the tyrants of England!
we never have sworn them alle-
giance!

Death to these foreign soldiers, who
seize on our homes and our har-
vests!”

More he fain would have said, but the
merciless hand of a soldier
Smote him upon the mouth, and dragged
him down to the pavement.

In the midst of the strife and tumult
of angry contention,
Lo! the door of the chancel opened, and
Father Felician
Entered, with serious mien, and ascended
the steps of the altar.
Raising his reverend hand, with a ges-
ture he awed into silence

Evangeline ❀

All that clamorous throng; and thus
he spake to his people;

Deep were his tones and solemn; in
accents measured and mournful

Spake he, as, after the tocsin's alarum,
distinctly the clock strikes.

"What is this that ye do, my children?
what madness has seized you?

Forty years of my life have I laboured
among you, and taught you,

Not in word alone, but in deed, to love
one another!

Is this the fruit of my toils, of my vigils
and prayers and privations?

Have you so soon forgotten all lessons
of love and forgiveness?

This is the house of the Prince of Peace,
and would you profane it

Thus with violent deeds and hearts over-
flowing with hatred?

Lo! where the crucified Christ from
His cross is gazing upon you!
See! in those sorrowful eyes what meek-
ness and holy compassion!
Hark! how those lips still repeat the
prayer, 'O Father, forgive them!'
Let us repeat that prayer in the hour
when the wicked assail us,
Let us repeat it now, and say, 'O Fa-
ther, forgive them!'"

Few were his words of rebuke, but deep
in the hearts of his people
Sank they, and sobs of contrition suc-
ceeded that passionate outbreak,
While they repeated his prayer, and said,
"O Father, forgive them!"

Then came the evening service. The
tapers gleamed from the altar.

Evangeline ❀

Fervent and deep was the voice of the
priest, and the people responded,
Not with their lips alone, but their
hearts; and the Ave Maria
Sang they, and fell on their knees, and
their souls, with devotion trans-
lated,
Rose on the ardour of prayer, like
Elijah ascending to heaven.

Meanwhile had spread in the village
the tidings of ill, and on all sides
Wandered, wailing, from house to house
the women and children.
Long at her father's door Evangeline
stood, with her right hand
Shielding her eyes from the level rays
of the sun, that, descending,
Lighted the village street with mysteri-
ous splendour, and roofed each

✻ Evangeline

Peasant's cottage with golden thatch,
and emblazoned its windows.

Long within had been spread the snow-
white cloth on the table;

There stood the wheaten loaf, and the
honey fragrant with wild flowers;

There stood the tankard of ale, and the
cheese fresh brought from the dairy;

And at the head of the board the great
arm-chair of the farmer.

Thus did Evangeline wait at her father's
door, as the sunset

Threw the long shadows of trees o'er the
broad ambrosial meadows.

Ah! on her spirit within a deeper shadow
had fallen,

And from the fields of her soul a fra-
grance celestial ascended, —

Charity, meekness, love, and hope, and
forgiveness, and patience!

Evangeline ❧

Then, all-forgetful of self, she wandered
into the village,
Cheering with looks and words the dis-
consolate hearts of the women,
As o'er the darkening fields with linger-
ing steps they departed,
Urged by their household cares, and the
weary feet of their children.
Down sank the great red sun, and in
golden, glimmering vapours
Veiled the light of his face, like a
Prophet descending from Sinai.
Sweetly over the village the bell of the
Angelus sounded.

Meanwhile, amid the gloom, by the
church Evangeline lingered.
All was silent within; and in vain at the
door and the windows

Stood she, and listened and looked, till,
 overcome by emotion,
“Gabriel!” cried she, aloud with tremu-
 lous voice; but no answer
Came from the graves of the dead, nor
 the gloomier grave of the living.
Slowly at length she returned to the
 tenantless house of her father.
Smouldered the fire on the hearth, on
 the board was the supper untasted,
Empty and drear was each room, and
 haunted with phantoms of terror.
Sadly echoed her step on the stair and
 the floor of her chamber.
In the dead of the night she heard the
 whispering rain fall
Loud on the withered leaves of the syc-
 more-tree by the window.
Keenly the lightning flashed; and the
 voice of the neighbouring thunder

Evangeline ❧

Told her that God was in heaven, and
governed the world he created!
Then she remembered the tale she had
heard of the justice of heaven;
Soothed was her troubled soul, and she
peacefully slumbered till morning.

V.

FOUR times the sun had risen and
 set; and now on the fifth day
 Cheerily called the cock to the sleeping
 maids of the farm-house.
 Soon o'er the yellow fields, in silent and
 mournful procession,
 Came from the neighbouring hamlets
 and farms the Acadian women,
 Driving in ponderous wains their house-
 hold goods to the sea-shore,
 Pausing and looking back to gaze once
 more on their dwellings,
 Ere they were shut from sight by the
 winding road and the woodland.

Evangeline ❄

Close at their sides their children ran,
and urged on the oxen,
While in their little hands they clasped
some fragments of playthings.

Thus to the Gaspereau's mouth they
hurried; and there on the sea-beach
Piled in confusion lay the household
goods of the peasants.

All day long between the shore and the
ships did the boats ply;

All day long the wains came labouring
down from the village.

Late in the afternoon, when the sun was
near to his setting,

Echoing far o'er the fields came the roll
of drums from the church-yard.

Thither the women and children
thronged. On a sudden the church-
doors

Opened, and forth came the guard, and
marching in gloomy procession
Followed the long-imprisoned, but pa-
tient, Acadian farmers.

Even as pilgrims, who journey afar from
their homes and their country,
Sing as they go, and in singing forget
they are weary and way-worn,

So with songs on their lips the Acadian
peasants descended

Down from the church to the shore, amid
their wives and their daughters.

Foremost the young men came; and,
raising together their voices,

Sang with tremulous lips a chant of the
Catholic Missions: —

“Sacred heart of the Saviour! O inex-
haustible fountain!

Fill our hearts this day with strength
and submission and patience!”

Evangeline ❀

Then the old men, as they marched, and
the women that stood by the way-
side

Joined in the sacred psalm, and the birds
in the sunshine above them

Mingled their notes therewith, like
voices of spirits departed.

Half-way down to the shore Evangel-
ine waited in silence,

Not overcome with grief, but strong in
the hour of affliction, —

Calmly and sadly she waited, until the
procession approached her,

And she beheld the face of Gabriel pale
with emotion.

Tears then filled her eyes, and, eagerly
running to meet him,

Clasped she his hands, and laid her head
on his shoulder, and whispered, —

"Gabriel! be of good cheer! for if we
love one another,

Nothing, in truth, can harm us, whatever
mischances may happen!"

Smiling she spake these words; then
suddenly paused, for her father

Saw she slowly advancing. Alas! how
changed was his aspect!

Gone was the glow from his cheek, and
the fire from his eye, and his foot-
step

Heavier seemed with the weight of the
weary heart in his bosom.

But with a smile and a sigh, she clasped
his neck and embraced him,

Speaking words of endearment where
words of comfort availed not.

Thus to the Gaspereau's mouth moved
on that mournful procession.

Evangeline ❀

There disorder prevailed, and the tumult and stir of embarking.
Busily plied the freighted boats; and in the confusion
Wives were torn from their husbands,
and mothers, too late, saw their children
Left on the land, extending their arms,
with wildest entreaties.
So unto separate ships were Basil and Gabriel carried,
While in despair on the shore Evangeline stood with her father.
Half the task was not done when the sun went down, and the twilight
Deepened and darkened around; and in haste the refluent ocean
Fled away from the shore, and left the line of the sand-beach

✻ Evangeline

Covered with waifs of the tide, with
kelp and the slippery sea-weed.
Farther back in the midst of the house-
hold goods and the wagons,
Like to a gypsy camp, or a leaguer after
a battle,
All escape cut off by the sea, and the
sentinels near them,
Lay encamped for the night the houseless
Acadian farmers.
Back to its nethermost caves retreated
the bellowing ocean,
Dragging adown the beach the rattling
pebbles, and leaving
Inland and far up the shore the stranded
boats of the sailors.
Then, as the night descended, the herds
returned from their pastures;
Sweet was the moist still air with the
odour of milk from their udders;

Evangeline ❀

Lowing they waited, and long, at the
well-known bars of the farm-
yard, —

Waited and looked in vain for the voice
and the hand of the milkmaid,

Silence reigned in the street, from the
church no Angelus sounded,

Rose no smoke from the roofs, and
gleamed no lights from the win-
dows.

But on the shores meanwhile the even-
ing fires had been kindled,

Built of the drift-wood thrown on the
sands from wrecks in the tempest.

Round them shapes of gloom and sorrow-
ful faces were gathered,

Voices of women were heard, and of
men, and the crying of children.

✻ Evangeline

Onward from fire to fire, as from hearth
to hearth in his parish,
Wandered the faithful priest, consoling
and blessing and cheering,
Like unto shipwrecked Paul on Melita's
desolate sea-shore.
Thus he approached the place where
Evangeline sat with her father,
And in the flickering light beheld the
face of the old man,
Haggard and hollow and wan, and with-
out either thought or emotion,
E'en as the face of a clock from which
the hands have been taken.
Vainly Evangeline strove with words
and caresses to cheer him,
Vainly offered him food; yet he moved
not, he looked not, he spake not,
But, with a vacant stare, ever gazed at
the flickering fire-light.

Evangeline ❀

"*Benedicite!*" murmured the priest, in
tones of compassion.

More he fain would have said, but his
heart was full, and his accents

Faltered and paused on his lips, as the
feet of a child on a threshold,

Hushed by the scene he beholds, and
the awful presence of sorrow.

Silently, therefore, he laid his hand on
the head of the maiden,

Raising his eyes, full of tears, to the
silent stars that above them

Moved on their way, unperturbed by
the wrongs and sorrows of mortals.

Then sat he down at her side, and they
wept together in silence.

Suddenly rose from the south a light,
As in autumn the blood-red

Moon climbs the crystal walls of heaven,
and o'er the horizon

Titan-like stretches its hundred hands
upon mountain and meadow,

Seizing the rocks and the rivers, and
piling huge shadows together.

Broader and ever broader it gleamed on
the roofs of the village,

Gleamed on the sky and the sea, and
the ships that lay in the roadstead.

Columns of shining smoke uprose, and
flashes of flame were

Thrust through their folds and with-
drawn like the quivering hands of
a martyr.

Then as the winds seized the gleeds and
the burning thatch, and, uplifting,

Whirled them aloft through the air, at
once from a hundred house-tops

Evangeline ❧

Started the sheeted smoke with flashes
of flame intermingled.

These things beheld in dismay the
crowd on the shore and on ship-
board.

Speechless at first they stood, then cried
aloud in their anguish,

“We shall behold no more our homes
in the village of Grand-Pré!”

Loud on a sudden the cocks began to
crow in the farm-yards,

Thinking the day had dawned; and anon
the lowing of cattle

Came on the evening breeze, by the
barking of dogs interrupted.

Then rose a sound of dread, such as
startles the sleeping encampments

Far in the western prairies or forests
that skirt the Nebraska,

When the wild horses affrighted sweep
by with the speed of a whirlwind,
Or the loud bellowing herds of buffaloes
rush to the river.

Such was the sound that arose on the
night, as the herds and the horses
Broke through their folds and fences,
and madly rushed o'er the meadows.

Overwhelmed with the sight, yet
speechless, the priest and the maiden
Gazed on the scene of terror that red-
dened and widened before them;
And as they turned at length to speak
to their silent companion,
Lo! from his seat he had fallen, and
stretched abroad on the sea-shore
Motionless lay his form, from which
the soul had departed.

Evangeline ❀

Slowly the priest uplifted the lifeless
head, and the maiden
Knelt at her father's side, and wailed
aloud in her terror.

Then in a swoon she sank, and lay with
her head on his bosom.

Through the long night she lay in deep,
oblivious slumber;

And when she awoke from the trance,
she beheld a multitude near her.

Faces of friends she beheld, that were
mournfully gazing upon her,

Pallid, with tearful eyes, and looks of
saddest compassion.

Still the blaze of the burning village
illuminated the landscape,

Reddened the sky overhead, and gleamed
on the faces around her,

And like the day of doom it seemed to
her wavering senses.

Then a familiar voice she heard, as it
said to the people:

“ Let us bury him here by the sea. When
a happier season

Brings us again to our homes from the
unknown land of our exile,

Then shall his sacred dust be piously
laid in the church-yard.”

Such were the words of the priest. And
there in haste by the sea-side,

Having the glare of the burning village
for funeral torches,

But without bell or book, they buried
the farmer of Grand-Pré.

And as the voice of the priest repeated
the service of sorrow,

Lo! with a mournful sound, like the
voice of a vast congregation,

Solemnly answered the sea, and mingled
its roar with the dirges.

Evangeline ❀

'Twas the returning tide, that afar from
the waste of the ocean,
With the first dawn of the day, came
heaving and hurrying landward.
Then recommenced once more the stir
and noise of embarking;
And with the ebb of the tide the ships
sailed out of the harbour,
Leaving behind them the dead on the
shore, and the village in ruins.

PART THE SECOND

I.

MANY a weary year had passed
since the burning of Grand-Pré,
When on the falling tide the freighted
vessels departed,
Bearing a nation, with all its household
gods, into exile,
Exile without an end, and without an
example in story.
Far asunder, on separate coasts, the
Acadians landed ;
Scattered were they, like flakes of snow,
when the wind from the northeast

Evangeline ❀

Strikes aslant through the fogs that
darken the Banks of Newfound-
land.

Friendless, homeless, hopeless, they wan-
dered from city to city,

From the cold lakes of the North to
sultry Southern savannas, —

From the bleak shores of the sea to the
lands where the Father of Waters
Seizes the hills in his hands, and drags
them down to the ocean,

Deep in their sands to bury the scattered
bones of the mammoth.

Friends they sought and homes; and
many, despairing, heart-broken,

Asked of the earth but a grave, and no
longer a friend nor a fireside.

Written their history stands on tablets of
stone in the church-yards.

Long among them was seen a maiden
who waited and wandered,
Lowly and meek in spirit, and patiently
suffering all things.

Fair was she and young; but, alas! be-
fore her extended,

Dreary and vast and silent, the desert
of life, with its pathway

Marked by the graves of those who had
sorrowed and suffered before her,
Passions long extinguished, and hopes
long dead and abandoned,

As the emigrant's way o'er the Western
desert is marked by

Camp-fires long consumed, and bones
that bleach in the sunshine.

Something there was in her life incom-
plete, imperfect, unfinished;

As if a morning of June, with all its
music and sunshine,

Evangeline ❀

Suddenly paused in the sky, and, fading,
 slowly descended
Into the east again, from whence it late
 had arisen.
Sometimes she lingered in towns, till,
 urged by the fever within her,
Urged by a restless longing, the hunger
 and thirst of the spirit,
She would commence again her endless
 search and endeavour;
Sometimes in church-yards strayed, and
 gazed on the crosses and tomb-
 stones,
Sat by some nameless grave, and thought
 that perhaps in its bosom
He was already at rest, and she longed
 to slumber beside him.
Sometimes a rumour, a hearsay, an in-
 articulate whisper,

Came with its airy hand to point and
beckon her forward.

Sometimes she spake with those who had
seen her beloved and known him,
But it was long ago, in some far-off
place or forgotten.

“Gabriel Lajeunesse!” they said; “O
yes! we have seen him.

He was with Basil the blacksmith, and
both have gone to the prairies;
Coueurs-des-Bois are they, and famous
hunters and trappers.”

“Gabriel Lajeunesse!” said others;
“O yes! we have seen him.

He is a *Voyageur* in the lowlands of
Louisiana.”

Then would they say, — “Dear child!
why dream and wait for him
longer?”

Evangeline ❧

Are there not other youths as fair as
Gabriel? others

Who have hearts as tender and true, and
spirits as loyal?

Here is Baptiste Leblanc, the notary's
son, who has loved thee

Many a tedious year; come, give him
thy hand and be happy!

Thou art too fair to be left to braid St.
Catherine's tresses."

Then would Evangeline answer, serenely
but sadly, — "I cannot!

Whither my heart has gone, there fol-
lows my hand, and not elsewhere.

For when the heart goes before, like a
lamp, and illumines the pathway,

Many things are made clear, that else
lie hidden in darkness."

And thereupon the priest, her friend and
father-confessor,

Said, with a smile, — “ O daughter!
thy God thus speaketh within thee!
Talk not of wasted affection, affection
never was wasted;
If it enrich not the heart of another, its
waters, returning
Back to their springs, like the rain, shall
fill them full of refreshment;
That which the fountain sends forth
returns again to the fountain.
Patience; accomplish thy labour; accom-
plish thy work of affection!
Sorrow and silence are strong, and pa-
tient endurance is godlike.
Therefore accomplish thy labour of love,
till the heart is made godlike,
Purified, strengthened, perfected, and
rendered more worthy of heaven!”
Cheered by the good man’s words,
Evangeline laboured and waited.

Evangeline ❀

Still in her heart she heard the funeral
dirge of the ocean,

But with its sound there was mingled
a voice that whispered, "Despair
not!"

Thus did that poor soul wander in want
and cheerless discomfort,

Bleeding, barefooted, over the shards and
thorns of existence.

Let me essay, O Muse! to follow the
wanderer's footsteps;—

Not through each devious path, each
changeeful year of existence;

But as a traveller follows a streamlet's
course through the valley;

Far from its margin at times, and see-
ing the gleam of its water

Here and there, in some open space, and
at intervals only;

❖ Evangeline

Then drawing nearer its banks, through
sylvan glooms that conceal it,
Though he behold it not, he can hear
its continuous murmur;
Happy, at length, if he find the spot
where it reaches an outlet.

II.

IT was the month of May. Far down
the Beautiful River,
Past the Ohio shore and past the mouth
of the Wabash,
Into the golden stream of the broad and
swift Mississippi,
Floated a cumbrous boat, that was
rowed by Acadian boatmen.
It was a band of exiles; a raft, as it
were, from the shipwrecked
Nation, scattered along the coast, now
floating together,
Bound by the bonds of a common belief
and a common misfortune;

Men and women and children, who,
 guided by hope or by hearsay,
 Sought for their kith and their kin
 among the few-acred farmers
 On the Acadian coast, and the prairies of
 fair Opelousas.
 With them Evangeline went, and her
 guide, the Father Felician.
 Onward o'er sunken sands, through a
 wilderness sombre with forests,
 Day after day they glided adown the
 turbulent river;
 Night after night, by their blazing fires,
 encamped on its borders.
 Now through rushing chutes, among
 green islands, where plumelike
 Cotton-trees nodded their shadowy crests,
 they swept with the current,
 Then emerged into broad lagoons, where
 silvery sand-bars

Evangeline ❀

Lay in the stream, and along the wim-
pling waves of their margin,
Shining with snow-white plumes, large
flocks of pelicans waded.

Level the landscape grew, and along the
shores of the river,

Shaded by china-trees in the midst of
luxuriant gardens,

Stood the houses of planters, with negro-
cabins and dove-cots.

They were approaching the region where
reigns perpetual summer,

Where through the Golden Coast, and
groves of orange and citron

Sweeps with majestic curve the river
away to the eastward.

They, too, swerved from their course;
and, entering the Bayou of Plaque-
mine,

Soon were lost in a maze of sluggish
and devious waters,
Which, like a network of steel, extended
in every direction.
Over their heads the towering and tene-
brous boughs of the cypress
Met in a dusky arch, and trailing mosses
in midair
Waved like banners that hang on the
walls of ancient cathedrals.
Deathlike the silence seemed, and un-
broken, save by the herons
Home to their roosts in the cedar-trees
returning at sunset,
Or by the owl, as he greeted the moon
with demoniac laughter.
Lovely the moonlight was as it glanced
and gleamed on the water,
Gleamed on the columns of cypress and
cedar sustaining the arches,

Evangeline ❀

Down through whose broken vaults it
fell as through chinks in a ruin.

Dreamlike, and indistinct, and strange
were all things around them;

And o'er their spirits there came a feel-
ing of wonder and sadness, —

Strange forebodings of ill, unseen that
cannot be compassed.

As, at the tramp of a horse's hoof on the
turf of the prairies,

Far in advance are closed the leaves of
the shrinking mimosa,

So, at the hoof-beats of fate, with sad
forebodings of evil,

Shrinks and closes the heart, ere the
stroke of doom has attained it.

But Evangeline's heart was sustained by
a vision, that faintly

Floated before her eyes, and beckoned
her on through the moonlight.

It was the thought of her brain that
assumed the shape of a phantom.
Through those shadowy isles had Ga-
briel wandered before her,
And every stroke of the oar now
brought him nearer and nearer.

Then in his place, at the prow of the
boat, rose one of the oarsmen,
And, as a signal sound, if others like
them peradventure
Sailed on those gloomy and midnight
streams, blew a blast on his bugle.
Wild through the dark colonnades and
corridors leafy the blast rang,
Breaking the seal of silence, and giving
tongues to the forest.
Soundless above them the banners of
moss just stirred to the music.

Evangeline ❧

Multitudinous echoes awoke and died
in the distance,

Over the watery floor, and beneath the
reverberant branches;

But not a voice replied; no answer came
from the darkness;

And when the echoes had ceased, like a
sense of pain was the silence.

Then Evangeline slept; but the boatmen
rowed through the midnight,

Silent at times, then singing familiar
Canadian boat-songs,

Such as they sang of old on their own
Acadian rivers.

And through the night were heard the
mysterious sounds of the desert,

Far off, indistinct, as of wave or wind in
the forest,

Mixed with the whoop of the crane and
the roar of the grim alligator.

Thus ere another noon they emerged
from the shades; and before them
Lay, in the golden sun, the lakes of the
Atchafalaya.

Water-lilies in myriads rocked on the
slight undulations

Made by the passing oars, and, resplen-
dent in beauty, the lotus

Lifted her golden crown above the heads
of the boatmen.

Faint was the air with the odorous breath
of magnolia blossoms,

And with the heat of noon; and num-
berless sylvan islands,

Fragrant and thickly embowered with
blossoming hedges of roses,

Near to whose shores they glided along,
invited to slumber.

Soon by the fairest of these their weary
oars were suspended.

Evangeline ❀

Under the boughs of Wachita willows,
that grew by the margin,
Safely their boat was moored; and scattered about on the greensward,
Tired with their midnight toil, the
weary travellers slumbered.
Over them vast and high extended the
cope of a cedar.
Swinging from its great arms, the trumpet-flower and the grape-vine
Hung their ladder of ropes aloft like
the ladder of Jacob,
On whose pendulous stairs the angels
ascending, descending,
Were the swift humming-birds, that
flitted from blossom to blossom.
Such was the vision Evangeline saw as
she slumbered beneath it.
Filled was her heart with love, and the
dawn of an opening heaven

Lighted her soul in sleep with the glory
of regions celestial.

Nearer and ever nearer, among the
numberless islands,
Darted a light, swift boat, that sped away
o'er the water,
Urged on its course by the sinewy arms
of hunters and trappers.
Northward its prow was turned, to the
land of the bison and beaver.
At the helm sat a youth, with counte-
nance thoughtful and careworn.
Dark and neglected locks overshadowed
his brow, and a sadness
Somewhat beyond his years on his face
was legibly written.
Gabriel was it, who, weary with wait-
ing, unhappy and restless,

Evangeline ❀

Sought in the Western wilds oblivion of
self and of sorrow.

Swiftly they glided along, close under
the lee of the island,

But by the opposite bank, and behind a
screen of palmettos,

So that they saw not the boat, where it
lay concealed in the willows,

All undisturbed by the dash of their oars,
and unseen, were the sleepers,

Angel of God was there none to awaken
the slumbering maiden.

Swiftly they glided away, like the shade
of a cloud on a prairie.

After the sound of their oars on the
tholes had died in the distance,

As from a magic trance the sleepers
awoke, and the maiden

Said with a sigh to the friendly priest, —

“O Father Felician!”

Something says in my heart that near me
Gabriel wanders.

Is it a foolish dream, an idle and vague
superstition?

Or has an angel passed, and revealed the
truth to my spirit?"

Then with a blush, she added, — " Alas
for my credulous fancy!

Unto ears like thine such words as these
have no meaning."

But made answer the reverend man, and
he smiled as he answered, —

" Daughter, thy words are not idle; nor
are they to me without meaning.

Feeling is deep and still; and the word
that floats on the surface

Is as the tossing buoy, that betrays where
the anchor is hidden.

Therefore trust to thy heart, and to
what the world calls illusions.

Evangeline ❄

Gabriel truly is near thee; for not far
away to the southward,

On the banks of the Têche, are the
towns of St. Maur and St. Martin.

There the long-wandering bride shall be
given again to her bridegroom,

There the long-absent pastor regain his
flock and his sheepfold.

Beautiful is the land, with its prairies
and forests of fruit-trees;

Under the feet a garden of flowers, and
the bluest of heavens

Bending above, and resting its dome on
the walls of the forest.

They who dwell there have named it
the Eden of Louisiana."

And with these words of cheer they
arose and continued their journey.

Softly the evening came. The sun from
the western horizon
Like a magician extended his golden
wand o'er the landscape;
Twinkling vapours arose; and sky and
water and forest
Seemed all on fire at the touch, and
melted and mingled together.
Hanging between two skies, a cloud with
edges of silver,
Floated the boat, with its dripping oars,
on the motionless water.
Filled was Evangeline's heart with inexpressible
sweetness.
Touched by the magic spell, the sacred
fountains of feeling
Glowed with the light of love, as the
skies and waters around her.
Then from a neighbouring thicket the
mocking-bird, wildest of singers,

Evangeline ❀

Swinging aloft on a willow spray that
hung o'er the water,
Shook from his little throat such floods
of delirious music,
That the whole air and the woods and
the waves seemed silent to listen.
Plaintive at first were the tones and sad;
then soaring to madness
Seemed they to follow or guide the revel
of frenzied Bacchantes.
Then single notes were heard, in sorrowful, low lamentation;
Till, having gathered them all, he flung
them abroad in derision,
As when, after a storm, a gust of wind
through the tree-tops
Shakes down the rattling rain in a crystal shower on the branches.
With such a prelude as this, and hearts
that throbbed with emotion,

❖ Evangeline

Slowly they entered the Tête, where it
flows through the green Opelousas,
And through the amber air, above the
crest of woodland,
Saw the column of smoke that arose from
a neighbouring dwelling; —
Sounds of a horn they heard, and the dis-
tant lowing of cattle.

III.

NEAR to the bank of the river, o'er-
shadowed by oaks, from whose
branches
Garlands of Spanish moss and of mystic
mistletoe flaunted,
Such as the Druids cut down with golden
hatchets at Yule-tide,
Stood, secluded and still, the house of
the herdsman. A garden
Girded it round about with a belt of
luxuriant blossoms,
Filling the air with fragrance. The
house itself was of timbers
Hewn from the cypress-tree, and care-
fully fitted together.

Large and low was the roof; and on
slender columns supported,
Rose-wreathed, vine-encircled, a broad
and spacious veranda,
Haunt of the humming-bird and the bee,
extended around it.
At each end of the house, amid the flow-
ers of the garden,
Stationed the dove-cots were, as love's
perpetual symbol,
Scenes of endless wooing, and endless
contentions of rivals.
Silence reigned o'er the place. The line
of shadow and sunshine
Ran near the tops of the trees; but the
house itself was in shadow,
And from its chimney-top, ascending
and slowly expanding
Into the evening air, a thin blue column
of smoke rose.

Evangeline ❀

In the rear of the house, from the garden gate, ran a pathway
Through the great groves of oak to the skirts of the limitless prairie,
Into whose sea of flowers the sun was slowly descending.
Full in his track of light, like ships with shadowy canvas
Hanging loose from their spars in a motionless calm in the tropics,
Stood a cluster of trees, with tangled cordage of grape-vines.

Just where the woodlands met the flowery surf of the prairie,
Mounted upon his horse, with Spanish saddle and stirrups,
Sat a herdsman, arrayed in gaiters and doublet of deerskin.

Broad and brown was the face that from
 under the Spanish sombrero
 Gazed on the peaceful scene, with the
 lordly look of its master.
 Round about him were numberless herds
 of kine, that were grazing
 Quietly in the meadows, and breathing
 the vapoury freshness
 That uprose from the river, and spread
 itself over the landscape.
 Slowly lifting the horn that hung at
 his side, and expanding
 Fully his broad, deep chest, he blew
 a blast, that resounded
 Wildly and sweet and far, through the
 still damp air of the evening.
 Suddenly out of the grass the long white
 horns of the cattle
 Rose like flakes of foam on the adverse
 currents of ocean.

Evangeline ❧

Silent a moment they gazed, then bel-
lowing rushed o'er the prairie,
And the whole mass became a cloud, a
shade in the distance.

Then, as the herdsman turned to the
house, through the gate of the gar-
den

Saw he the forms of the priest and the
maiden advancing to meet him.

Suddenly down from his horse he sprang
in amazement, and forward

Rushed with extended arms and exclama-
tions of wonder ;

When they beheld his face, they recog-
nized Basil, the blacksmith.

Hearty his welcome was, as he led his
guests to the garden.

There in an arbour of roses with endless
question and answer

Gave they vent to their hearts, and re-
newed their friendly embraces,
Laughing and weeping by turns, or sit-
ting silent and thoughtful.
Thoughtful, for Gabriel came not; and
now dark doubts and misgivings
Stole o'er the maiden's heart; and
Basil, somewhat embarrassed,
Broke the silence and said, — "If you
came by the Atchafalaya,
How have you nowhere encountered my
Gabriel's boat on the bayous?"
Over Evangeline's face at the words of
Basil a shade passed.
Tears came into her eyes, and she said,
with a tremulous accent:
"Gone? is Gabriel gone?" and, con-
cealing her face on his shoulder,
All her o'erburdened heart gave way,
and she wept and lamented.

Evangeline ❀

Then the good Basil said, — and his
voice grew blithe as he said it, —

“ Be of good cheer, my child ; it is only
to-day he departed.

Foolish boy ! he has left me alone with
my herds and my horses.

Moody and restless grown, and tried and
troubled, his spirit

Could no longer endure the calm of this
quiet existence.

Thinking ever of thee, uncertain and
sorrowful ever,

Ever silent, or speaking only of thee and
his troubles,

He at length had become so tedious to
men and to maidens,

Tedious even to me, that at length I be-
thought me, and sent him

Unto the town of Adayes to trade for
mules with the Spaniards.

Thence he will follow the Indian trails
to the Ozark Mountains,
Hunting for furs in the forest, on rivers
trapping the beaver.

Therefore be of good cheer; we will
follow the fugitive lover;

He is not far on his way, and the Fates
and the streams are against him.

Up and away to-morrow, and through
the red dew of the morning

We will follow him fast, and bring him
back to his prison."

Then glad voices were heard, and up
from the banks of the river,
Borne aloft on his comrades' arms, came
Michael the fiddler.

Long under Basil's roof had he lived like
a god on Olympus,

Evangeline ❀

Having no other care than dispensing
music to mortals.

Far renowned was he for his silver locks
and his fiddle.

“Long live Michael,” they cried, “our
brave Acadian minstrel!”

As they bore him aloft in triumphal pro-
cession; and straightway

Father Felician advanced with Evangel-
ine, greeting the old man

Kindly and oft, and recalling the past,
while Basil, enraptured,

Hailed with hilarious joy his old com-
panions and gossips,

Laughing loud and long, and embracing
mothers and daughters.

Much they marvelled to see the wealth
of the ci-devant blacksmith,

All his domains and his herds, and his
patriarchal demeanour;

Much they marvelled to hear his tales
of the soil and the climate,
And of the prairies, whose numberless
herds were his who would take
them;
Each one thought in his heart that he,
too, would go and do likewise.
Thus they ascended the steps, and, cross-
ing the breezy veranda,
Entered the hall of the house, where al-
ready the supper of Basil
waited his late return; and they rested
and feasted together.

Over the joyous feast the sudden dark-
ness descended.
All was silent without, and, illuming
the landscape with silver,
Fair rose the dewy moon and the myriad
stars; but within doors,

Evangeline ❀

Brighter than these, shone the faces of
 friends in the glimmering lamplight.
Then from his station aloft, at the head
 of the table, the herdsman
Poured forth his heart and his wine to-
 gether in endless profusion.
Lighting his pipe, that was filled with
 sweet Natchitoches tobacco,
Thus he spake to his guests, who listened,
 and smiled as they listened:—
“Welcome once more, my friends, who
 long have been friendless and home-
 less,
Welcome once more to a home, that is
 better perchance than the old one!
Here no hungry winter congeals our
 blood like the rivers;
Here no stony ground provokes the
 wrath of the farmer.

Smoothly the ploughshare runs through
the soil, as a keel through the water.
All the year round the orange-groves are
in blossom; and grass grows
More in a single night than a whole
Canadian summer.
Here, too, numberless herds run wild
and unclaimed in the prairies;
Here, too, lands may be had for the ask-
ing, and forests of timber
With a few blows of the axe are hewn
and framed into houses.
After your houses are built, and your
fields are yellow with harvests,
No King George of England shall drive
you away from your homesteads,
Burning your dwellings and barns, and
stealing your farms and your
cattle."

Evangeline ❀

Speaking these words, he blew a wrathful
cloud from his nostrils,
While his huge, brawny hand came
thundering down on the table,
So that the guests all started; and Father
Felician, astounded,
Suddenly paused, with a pinch of snuff
half-way to his nostrils.
But the brave Basil resumed, and his
words were milder and gayer:—
“Only beware of the fever, my friends,
beware of the fever!
For it is not like that of our cold Aca-
dian climate,
Cured by wearing a spider hung round
one’s neck in a nutshell!”
Then there were voices heard at the door,
and footsteps approaching
Sounded upon the stairs and the floor
of the breezy veranda.

It was the neighbouring Creoles and
 small Acadian planters,
 Who had been summoned all to the house
 of Basil the Herdsman.
 Merry the meeting was of ancient com-
 rades and neighbours:
 Friend clasped friend in his arms; and
 they who before were as strangers,
 Meeting in exile, he came straightway as
 friends to each other,
 Drawn by the gentle bond of a common
 country together.
 But in the neighbouring hall a strain of
 music, proceeding
 From the accordant strings of Michael's
 melodious fiddle,
 Broke up all further speech. Away, like
 children delighted,
 All things forgotten beside, they gave
 themselves to the maddening

Evangeline ❀

Whirl of the dizzy dance, as it swept
and swayed to the music,
Dreamlike, with beaming eyes and the
rush of fluttering garments.

Meanwhile, apart at the head of the
hall, the priest and the herdsman
Sat, conversing together of past and
present and future;
While Evangeline stood like one en-
tranced, for within her
Olden memories rose, and loud in the
midst of the music
Heard she the sound of the sea, and an
irrepressible sadness
Came o'er her heart, and unseen she stole
forth into the garden.
Beautiful was the night. Behind the
black wall of the forest,

Tipping its summit with silver, arose the
moon. On the river
Fell here and there through the branches
a tremulous gleam of the moonlight,
Like the sweet thoughts of love on a
darkened and devious spirit.
Nearer and round about her, the mani-
fold flowers of the garden
Poured out their souls in odours, that
were their prayers and confessions
Unto the night, as it went its way, like
a silent Carthusian.
Fuller of fragrance than they, and as
heavy with shadows and night-dews,
Hung the heart of the maiden. The
calm and the magical moonlight
Seemed to inundate her soul with in-
definable longings,
As, through the garden gate, and be-
neath the shade of the oak-trees,

Evangeline ❀

Passed she along the path to the edge of
the measureless prairie.

Silent it lay, with a silvery haze upon
it, and fire-flies

Gleaming and floating away in mingled
and infinite numbers.

Over her head the stars, the thoughts of
God in the heavens,

Shone on the eyes of man, who had
ceased to marvel and worship,

Save when a blazing comet was seen on
the walls of that temple,

As if a hand had appeared and written
upon them, "Upharsin."

And the soul of the maiden, between the
stars and the fire-flies,

Wandered alone, and she cried, — "O
Gabriel! O my beloved!

Art thou so near unto me, and yet I
cannot behold thee?

Art thou so near unto me, and yet thy
voice does not reach me?

Ah! how often thy feet have trod this
path to the prairie!

Ah! how often thine eyes have looked
on the woodlands around me!

Ah! how often beneath this oak, re-
turning from labour,

Thou hast lain down to rest, and to
dream of me in thy slumbers.

When shall these eyes behold, these arms
be folded about thee? "

Loud and sudden and near the note of a
whippoorwill sounded

Like a flute in the woods; and anon,
through the neighbouring thickets,

Farther and farther away it floated and
dropped into silence.

"Patience!" whispered the oaks from
oracular caverns of darkness;

Evangeline ❀

And, from the moonlit meadow, a sigh
responded, "To-morrow!"

Bright rose the sun next day; and all
the flowers of the garden
Bathed his shining feet with their tears,
and anointed his tresses
With the delicious balm that they bore
in their vases of crystal.
"Farewell!" said the priest, as he stood
at the shadowy threshold;
"See that you bring us the Prodigal
Son from his fasting and famine,
And, too, the Foolish Virgin, who slept
when the bridegroom was coming."
"Farewell!" answered the maiden, and,
smiling, with Basil descended
Down to the river's brink, where the
boatmen already were waiting.

Thus beginning their journey with morn-
 ing, and sunshine, and gladness,
 Swiftly they followed the flight of him
 who was speeding before them,
 Blown by the blast of fate like a dead
 leaf over the desert.
 Not that day, nor the next, nor yet the
 day that succeeded,
 Found they trace of his course, in lake
 or forest or river,
 Nor, after many days, had they found
 him; but vague and uncertain
 Rumours alone were their guides through
 a wild and desolate country;
 Till, at the little inn of the Spanish town
 of Adayes,
 Weary and worn, they alighted, and
 learned from the garrulous land-
 lord,

Evangeline ❧

That on the day before, with horses and
guides and companions,
Gabriel left the village, and took the
road of the prairies.

IV.

FAR in the West there lies a desert
 land, where the mountains
 Lift, through perpetual snows, their
 lofty and luminous summits.
 Down from their desolate, deep ravines,
 where the gorge, like a gateway,
 Opens a passing rude to the wheels of the
 emigrant's wagon,
 Westward the Oregon flows and the
 Walleway and Owyhee.
 Eastward, with devious course, among
 the Wind-river Mountains,
 Through the Sweet-water Valley precip-
 itate leaps the Nebraska;

Evangeline ❀

And to the south, from Fontaine-qui-
bout and the Spanish sierras,
Fretted with sands and rocks, and swept
by the wind of the desert,
Numberless torrents, with ceaseless
sound, descend to the ocean,
Like the great chords of a harp, in loud
and solemn vibrations.
Spreading between these streams are the
wondrous, beautiful prairies,
Billowy bays of grass ever rolling in
shadow and sunshine,
Bright with luxuriant clusters of roses
and purple amorphas.
Over them wander the buffalo herds,
and the elk and the roebuck;
Over them wander the wolves and herds
of riderless horses;
Fires that blast and blight, and winds
that are weary with travel;

Over them wander the scattered tribes
of Ishmael's children,
Staining the desert with blood; and
above their terrible war-trails
Circles and sails aloft, on pinions
majestic, the vulture,
Like the implacable soul of a chieftain
slaughtered in battle,
By invisible stairs ascending and scaling
the heavens.
Here and there rise smokes from the
camps of these savage marauders;
Here and there rise groves from the
margins of swift-running rivers;
And the grim, taciturn bear, the ancho-
rite monk of the desert,
Climbs down their dark ravines to dig
for roots by the brook-side,
And over all is the sky, the clear and
crystalline heaven,

Evangeline ❁

Like the protecting hand of God inverted above them.

Into this wonderful land, at the base
of the Ozark Mountains,
Gabriel far had entered, with hunters
and trappers behind him.
Day after day, with their Indian guides,
the maiden and Basil
Followed his flying steps, and thought
each day to o'ertake him.
Sometimes they saw, or thought they
saw, the smoke of his camp-fire
Rise in the morning air from the distant
plain; but at nightfall,
When they had reached the place, they
found only embers and ashes.
And, though their hearts were sad at
times and their bodies were weary,

Hope still guided them on, as the magic
Fata Morgana
Showed them her lakes of light, that re-
treated and vanished before them.

Once, as they sat by their evening fire,
there silently entered
Into the little camp an Indian woman,
whose features
Wore deep traces of sorrow, and patience
as great as her sorrow.
She was a Shawnee woman returning
home to her people,
From the far-off hunting grounds of
the cruel Camanches,
Where her Canadian husband, a Cou-
reur-des-Bois, had been murdered.
Touched were their hearts at her story,
and warmest and friendliest wel-
come

Evangeline ❀

Gave they, with words of cheer, and she
sat and feasted among them
On the buffalo meat and the venison
cooked on the embers.
But when their meal was done, and
Basil and all his companions,
Worn with the long day's march and the
chase of the deer and the bison,
Stretched themselves on the ground, and
slept where the quivering fire-light
Flashed on their swarthy cheeks, and
their forms wrapped up in their
blankets,
Then at the door of Evangeline's tent
she sat and repeated
Slowly, with soft, low voice, and the
charm of her Indian accent,
All the tale of her love, with its pleasures,
and pains, and reverses.

Much Evangeline wept at the tale, and
to know that another
Hapless heart like her own had loved
and had been disappointed.
Moved to the depths of her soul by pity
and woman's compassion,
Yet in her sorrow pleased that one who
had suffered was near her,
She in turn related her love and all its
disasters.
Mute with wonder the Shawnee sat,
and when she had ended
Still was mute ; but at length, as if a mys-
terious horror
Passed through her brain, she spake, and
repeated the tale of the Mowis ;
Mowis, the bridegroom of snow, who
won and wedded a maiden,
But, when the morning came, arose and
passed from the wigwam,

Evangeline ❀

Fading and melting away and dissolv-
ing into the sunshine,
Till she beheld him no more, though
she followed far into the forest.
Then, in those sweet, low tones, that
seemed like a weird incantation,
Told she the tale of the fair Lilinau,
who was wooed by a phantom,
That, through the pines, o'er her
father's lodge, in the hush of the
twilight,
Breathed like the evening wind, and
whispered love to the maiden,
Till she followed his green and waving
plume through the forest,
And nevermore returned, nor was seen
again by her people.
Silent with wonder and strange sur-
prise, Evangeline listened

✱ Evangeline

To the soft flow of her magical words,
till the region around her
Seemed like enchanted ground, and her
swarthy guest the enchantress.
Slowly over the tops of the Ozark
Mountains the moon rose,
Lighting the little tent, and with a myste-
rious splendour
Touching the sombre leaves, and em-
bracing and filling the woodland.
With a delicious sound the brook rushed
by, and the branches
Swayed and sighed overhead in scarcely
audible whispers.
Filled with the thoughts of love was
Evangeline's heart, but a secret,
Subtile sense crept in of pain and indefi-
nite terror,
As the cold, poisonous snake creeps into
the nest of the swallow.

Evangeline ❀

It was no earthly fear. A breath from
the region of spirits
Seemed to float in the air of night; and
she fe't for a moment
That, like the Indian maid, she, too, was
pursuing a phantom.
With this thought she slept, and the
fear and the phantom had vanished.

Early upon the morrow the march
was resumed; and the Shawnee
Said, as they journeyed along, —“ On
the western slope of these moun-
tains
Dwells in his little village the Black
Robe chief of the Mission.
Much he teaches the people, and tells
them of Mary and Jesus;
Loud laugh their hearts with joy, and
weep with pain, as they hear him.”

Then, with a sudden and secret emotion,
Evangeline answered, —
“ Let us go to the Mission, for there
good tidings await us! ”
Thither they turned their steeds; and
behind a spur of the mountains,
Just as the sun went down, they heard
a murmur of voices,
And in a meadow green and broad, by
the bank of a river,
Saw the tents of the Christians, the
tents of the Jesuit Mission.
Under a towering oak, that stood in the
midst of the village,
Knelt the Black Robe chief with his
children. A crucifix fastened
High on the trunk of the tree, and over-
shadowed by grape-vines,
Looked with its agonised face on the
multitude kneeling beneath it.

Evangeline ❀

This was their rural chapel. Aloft,
 through the intricate arches
Of its aerial roof, arose the chant of
 their vespers,
Mingling its notes with the soft susur-
 rus and sighs of the branches.
Silent, with heads uncovered, the travel-
 lers, nearer approaching,
Knelt on the swarded floor, and joined
 in the evening devotions.
But when the service was done, and the
 benediction had fallen
Forth from the hands of the priest, like
 seed from the hands of the sower,
Slowly the reverend man advanced to
 the strangers, and bade them
Welcome; and when they replied, he
 smiled with benignant expression,
Hearing the homelike sounds of his
 mother-tongue in the forest,

And, with words of kindness conducted them into his wigwam.

There upon mats and skins they reposed, and on cakes of the maize-ear Feasted, and slaked their thirst from the water-gourd of the teacher.

Soon was their story told; and the priest with solemnity answered:—

“Not six suns have risen and set since Gabriel, seated

On this mat by my side, where now the maiden reposes,

Told me this same sad tale; then arose and continued his journey!”

Soft was the voice of the priest, and he spake with an accent of kindness;

But on Evangeline's heart fell his words as in winter the snowflakes

Fall into some lone nest from which the birds have departed.

Evangeline ❧

“Far to the north he has gone,” continued the priest; “but in autumn, When the chase is done, will return again to the Mission.”

Then Evangeline said, and her voice was meek and submissive, —

“Let me remain with thee, for my soul is sad and afflicted.”

So seemed it wise and well unto all; and betimes on the morrow,

Mounting his Mexican steed, with his Indian guides and companions,

Homeward Basil returned, and Evangeline stayed at the Mission.

Slowly, slowly, slowly the days succeeded each other, —

Days and weeks and months; and the fields of maize that were springing

✻ Evangeline

Green from the ground when a stranger
 she came, now waving above her,
Lifted their slender shafts, with leaves
 interlacing, and forming
Cloisters for mendicant crows and gran-
 aries pillaged by squirrels.
Then in the golden weather the maize
 was husked, and the maidens
Blushed at each blood-red ear, for that
 betokened a lover,
But at the crooked laughed, and called
 it a thief in the corn-field.
Even the blood-red ear to Evangeline
 brought not her lover.
“Patience!” the priest would say; “have
 faith, and thy prayer will be an-
 swered!
Look at this vigorous plant that lifts its
 head from the meadow,

Evangeline ❀

See how its leaves are turned to the
north, as true as the magnet;
It is the compass-flower, that the finger
of God has suspended
Here on its fragile stalk, to direct the
traveller's journey
Over the sea-like, pathless, limitless
waste of the desert.
Such in the soul of man is faith. The
blossoms of passion,
Gay and luxuriant flowers, are brighter
and fuller of fragrance,
But they beguile us, and lead us astray,
and their odour is deadly.
Only this humble plant can guide us
here, and hereafter
Crown us with asphodel flowers, that
are wet with the dew of nepenthe."
So came the autumn, and passed, and

✻ Evangeline

the winter, — yet Gabriel came
not;

Blossomed the opening spring, and the
notes of the robin and blue-bird
Sounded sweet upon wold and in wood,
yet Gabriel came not.

But on the breath of the summer winds
a rumour was wafted
Sweeter than song of bird, or hue or
odour of blossom.

Far to the north and east, it said, in the
Michigan forests,
Gabriel had his lodge by the banks of
the Saginaw River.

And, with returning guides, that sought
the lakes of St. Lawrence,
Saying a sad farewell, Evangeline went
from the Mission.

When over weary ways, by long and
perilous marches,

Evangeline ❧

She had attained at length the depths of
the Michigan forests,
Found she the hunter's lodge deserted
and fallen to ruin!

Thus did the long sad years glide on,
and in seasons and places
Divers and distant far was seen the wan-
dering maiden; —
Now in the tents of grace of the meek
Moravian Missions,
Now in the noisy camps and battle-fields
of the army,
Now in secluded hamlets, in towns and
populous cities.
Like a phantom she came, and passed
away unremembered.
Fair was she and young, when in hope
began the long journey;

✻ Evangeline

Faded was she and old, when in disappointment it ended.

Each succeeding year stole something away from her beauty,

Leaving behind it, broader and deeper, the gloom and the shadow.

Then there appeared and spread faint streaks of gray o'er her forehead,

Dawn of another life, that broke o'er her earthly horizon,

As in the eastern sky the first faint streaks of the morning.

Evangeline ❖

V.

IN that delightful land which is
washed by the Delaware's waters,
Guarding in sylvan shades the name of
Penn the apostle,
Stands on the banks of its beautiful
stream the city he founded.
There all the air is balm, and the peach
is the emblem of beauty,
And the streets still reëcho the names
of the trees of the forest,
As if they fain would appease the Dryads
whose haunts they molested.
There from the troubled sea had Evan-
geline landed, an exile,

Finding among the children of Penn a
home and a country.
There old Renè Leblanc had died; and
when he departed,
Saw at his side only one of all his hun-
dred descendants.
Something at least there was in the
friendly streets of the city,
Something that spake to her heart, and
made her no longer a stranger;
And her ear was pleased with the Thee
and Thou of the Quakers,
For it recalled the past, the old Acadian
country,
Where all men were equal, and all were
brothers and sisters.
So, when the fruitless search, the dis-
appointed endeavour,
Ended, to recommence no more upon
earth, uncomplaining,

Evangeline ❀

Thither, as leaves to the light, were
turned her thoughts and her foot-
steps.

As from a mountain's top the rainy mists
of the morning

Roll away, and afar we behold the land-
scape below us,

Sun-illuminated, with shining rivers and
cities and hamlets,

So fell the mists from her mind, and
she saw the world far below her,

Dark no longer, but all illumined with
love; and the pathway

Which she had climbed so far, lying
smooth and fair in the distance.

Gabriel was not forgotten. Within her
heart was his image,

Clothed in the beauty of love and youth,
as last she beheld him,

Only more beautiful by his deathlike
silence and absence.

Into her thoughts of him time entered
not, for it was not.

Over him years had no power; he was
not changed, but transfigured;

He had become to her heart as one who
is dead, and not absent;

Patience and abnegation of self, and
devotion to others,

This was a lesson a life of trial and sor-
row had taught her.

So was her love diffused, but, like to
some odorous spices,

Suffered no waste nor loss, though fill-
ing the air with aroma.

Other hope had she none, nor wish in
life, but to follow

Meekly, with reverent steps, the sacred
feet of her Saviour.

Evangeline ❀

Thus many years she lived as a Sister of
 Mercy; frequenting
Lonely and wretched roofs in the
 crowded lanes of the city,
Where distress and want concealed them-
 selves from the sunlight,
Where disease and sorrow in garrets
 languished neglected.
Night after night, when the world was
 asleep, as the watchman repeated
Loud, through the gusty streets, that
 all was well in the city,
High at some lonely window he saw the
 light of her taper.
Day after day, in the gray of the dawn,
 as slow through the suburbs
Plodded the German farmer, with
 flowers and fruits for the market,
Met he that meek, pale face, returning
 home from its watchings.

Then it came to pass that a pestilence
 fell on the city,
 Presaged by wondrous signs, and mostly
 by flocks of wild pigeons,
 Darkening the sun in their flight, with
 naught in their craws but an acorn.
 And, as the tides of the sea arise in the
 month of September,
 Flooding some silver stream, till it
 spreads to a lake in the meadow,
 So death flooded life, and, o'erflowing
 its natural margin,
 Spread to a brackish lake, the silver
 stream of existence.
 Wealth had no power to bribe, nor
 beauty to charm, the oppressor;
 But all perished alike under the scourge
 of his anger; —
 Only, alas! the poor, who had neither
 friends nor attendants,

Evangeline ❀

Crept away to die in the almshouse, home
of the homeless.

Then in the suburbs it stood, in the midst
of meadows and woodlands;—

Now the city surrounds it; but still,
with its gateway and wicket

Meek, in the midst of splendour, its
humble walls seem to echo

Softly the words of the Lord:—“The
poor ye always have with you.”

Thither, by night and by day, came the
Sister of Mercy. The dying

Looked up into her face, and thought,
indeed, to behold there

Gleams of celestial light encircle her
forehead with splendour,

Such as the artist paints o'er the brows
of saints and apostles,

Or such as hangs by night o'er a city
seen at a distance.

Unto their eyes it seemed the lamps of
the city celestial,
Into whose shining gates erelong their
spirits would enter.

Thus, on a Sabbath morn, through
the streets, deserted and silent,
Wending her quiet way, she entered the
door of the almshouse.
Sweet on the summer air was the odour
of flowers in the garden;
And she paused on her way to gather
the fairest among them,
That the dying once more might re-
joice in their fragrance and beauty.
Then, as she mounted the stairs to the
corridors, cooled by the east wind,
Distant and soft on her ear fell the
chimes from the belfry of Christ
Church,

Evangeline ❀

And intermingled with these, across the
meadows were wafted
Sounds of psalms, that were sung by the
Swedes in their church at Wicaco.
Soft as descending wings fell the calm
of the hour on her spirit;
Something within her said, — “At
length thy trials are ended;”
And, with light in her looks, she entered
the chambers of sickness.
Noiselessly moved about the assiduous,
careful attendants,
Moistening the feverish lip, and the
aching brow, and in silence
Closing the sightless eyes of the dead,
and concealing their faces,
Where on their pallets they lay, like
drifts of snow by the road-side.
Many a languid head, upraised as
Evangeline entered,

✱ Evangeline

Turned on its pillow of pain to gaze
while she passed, for her presence
Fell on their hearts like a ray of the sun
on the walls of a prison.
And, as she looked around, she saw how
Death, the consoler,
Laying his hand upon many a heart, had
healed it for ever.
Many familiar forms had disappeared
in the night-time;
Vacant their places were, or filled al-
ready by strangers.

Suddenly, as if arrested by fear or a
feeling of wonder,
Still she stood, with her colourless lips
apart, while a shudder
Ran through her frame, and, forgotten,
the flowerets dropped from her
fingers,

Evangeline ❀

And from her eyes and cheeks the light
and bloom of the morning.
Then there escaped from her lips a cry
of such terrible anguish,
That the dying heard it, and started up
from their pillows.
On the pallet before her was stretched
the form of an old man.
Long, and thin, and gray were the locks
that shaded his temples;
But, as he lay in the morning light, his
face for a moment
Seemed to assume once more the forms
of its earlier manhood;
So are wont to be changed the faces of
those who are dying.
Hot and red on his lips still burned the
flush of the fever,
As if life, like the Hebrew, with blood
besprinkled its portals,

That the Angel of Death might see the
sign, and pass over.

Motionless, senseless, dying, he lay, and
his spirit exhausted

Seemed to be sinking down through in-
finite depths in the darkness,

Darkness of slumber and death, for ever
sinking and sinking.

Then through those realms of shade,
in multiplied reverberations,

Heard he that cry of pain, and through
the hush that succeeded

Whispered a gentle voice, in accents
tender and saint-like,

“Gabriel! O my beloved!” and died
away into silence.

Then he beheld, in a dream, once more
the home of his childhood;

Green Acadian meadows, with sylvan
rivers among them,

Evangeline ❀

Village, and mountain, and woodlands;
and, walking under their shadow,
As in days of her youth, Evangeline rose
in his vision.

Tears came into his eyes; and as slowly
he lifted his eyelids,

Vanished the vision away, but Evangel-
ine knelt by his bedside.

Vainly he strove to whisper her name,
for the accents unuttered

Died on his lips, and their motion re-
vealed what his tongue would have
spoken.

Vainly he strove to rise; and Evangel-
ine, kneeling beside him,

Kissed his dying lips, and laid his head
on her bosom.

Sweet was the light of his eyes; but it
suddenly sank into darkness,

As when a lamp is blown out by a gust
of wind at a casement.

All was ended now, the hope, and the
fear, and the sorrow,
All the aching of heart, the restless, un-
satisfied longing,
All the dull, deep pain, and constant
anguish of patience!
And, as she pressed once more the life-
less head to her bosom,
Meekly she bowed her own, and mur-
mured, "Father, I thank Thee!"

Evangeline ❧

STILL stands the forest primeval;
but far away from its shadow,
Side by side, in their nameless graves,
the lovers are sleeping.
Under the humble walls of the little
Catholic church-yard,
In the heart of the city, they lie, un-
known and unnoticed.
Daily the tides of life go ebbing and
flowing beside them,
Thousands of throbbing hearts, where
theirs are at rest and for ever,
Thousands of aching brains, where theirs
no longer are busy,
Thousands of toiling hands, where theirs
have ceased from their labours,

Thousands of weary feet, where theirs
have completed their journey!

Still stands the forest primeval; but
under the shade of its branches
Dwells another race, with other cus-
toms and language.
Only along the shore of the mournful
and misty Atlantic
Linger a few Acadian peasants, whose
fathers from exile
Wandered back to their native land to
die in its bosom.
In the fisherman's cot the wheel and the
loom are still busy;
Maidens still wear their Norman caps
and their kirtles of homespun,
And by the evening fire repeat Evange-
line's story,

Evangeline ❧

While from its rocky caverns the deep-
voiced, neighbouring ocean
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate an-
swers the wail of the forest.

THE END.

